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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000211

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [UK](#) [FR](#)  
SUBJECT: WORKING TO PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS FOR EU MISSION  
TO BURMA

REF: VAJDA-YOUNG EMAIL - 02/11/10

Classified By: Political Counselor Andrew Young, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Drawing on ref, Post took advantage of an informal meeting with French and British representatives to press all interlocutors with the Burmese government to maintain a high standard of access for visiting delegations. Post suggested that all visitors maintain the same minimum standard of access to political leaders as was secured by A/S Campbell during his November 2009 visit to prevent backsliding by the government of Burma. The EU intends to send a mission to Burma as early as April 2010 and believes they will not be able to secure this same level of cooperation from the Burmese. The French want the same level of access from the GOB that A/S Campbell received, but worry about the costs of not sending a mission at all if EU demands are not met. The British strongly believe that an EU mission should receive the same level of access as A/S Campbell received during his recent visit, including a meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). The British do not currently support a UN Commission of Inquiry in Burma, in keeping with their assessment that there are insufficient votes for passage. They also oppose technical assistance for upcoming elections. Post believes this dialogue will help coordinate P3 messaging on Burma and notes French counterparts welcomed enhanced coordination with counterparts in Rangoon. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Drawing on background in ref, POLCOUNS met with French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and British Foreign and Commonwealth Office representatives on February 11, 2010 in an effort to discuss informally Burma policy. MFA Deputy for EU External Affairs Nicolas Suran confirmed earlier reports that the EU is considering a mission to Burma in 2010, possibly in April. Still to be determined is who would participate and the conditions under which the mission would take place, though the Troika and a Special Envoy is the preferred group. The GOB has thus far resisted the possibility of a meeting with ASSK, informing EU representatives that the GOB does not consider the EU entitled to the same conditions agreed to for A/S Campbell's visit in November 2009. MFA Southeast Asia DAS-equivalent Charles-Henri Brosseau stressed that the French want the same level of access received by A/S Campbell and affirmed the importance of the French, British, EU and USG coordinating efforts. Suran, however, wondered whether it would be better to proceed with a mission on less than optimal terms, perhaps at a lower level, than to have no mission at all.

¶3. (C) FCO Deputy Head for South East Asia and Pacific Group Gill Lever agreed with POLCOUNS that the EU should only agree to a high level mission afforded the same conditions as A/S Campbell. Lever stated in the strongest possible terms that an EU visit that does not include a meeting with ASSK would be a failure and embarrassing to the EU. A meeting with ASSK

is a "red line," she insisted, without which there should be no mission. Indeed, she noted, ASSK has insisted on certain conditions in her letters to the GOB and if the EU does not insist on the GOB meeting ASSK's conditions, it risks marginalizing her. Lever stated that the GOB cannot be permitted to dictate terms to the EU. In an e-mail to POLCOUNS following the meeting, Lever reiterated that the British Government is in agreement with USG support for high standards for an EU Troika mission and believes it is helpful for the USG to repeat this message to all EU partners.

¶4. (C) The parties also discussed the issue of whether to support a UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) into human rights abuses in Burma. Lever explained that the British Government is under pressure from NGOs to back a COI but has decided for the time being not to do so. Lever stated that she sees almost no chance of a COI being approved by the UN Security Council, with Russia and China likely to veto such an effort. There are also practical problems, she noted, such as the need for the GOB to provide access to Burma for the UN to conduct its investigation. Pushing a COI that is doomed to failure would only divide the EU and the international community and bolster the GOB. Lever noted, however, that the British Government could change its position should further evidence of human rights abuses develop.

¶5. (C) With respect to the elections announced by the GOB, Lever said she opposed the UN's providing technical assistance in the absence of any indication that the elections will be free and fair. If the opposition agrees to participate, the provision of monitors might be appropriate.

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¶6. (C/NF) COMMENT: While these are decisions for Washington and USUN to take, Post was struck by the intense interest of the French MFA to learn of Embassy Rangoon experience in negotiating A/S Campbell's November 2009 visit. Notwithstanding valid EU concerns that their leverage over the Government of Burma is more limited than that of the USG, we believe continued consultations could help stiffen EU resolve to maintain a high standard of access for visiting delegations. While FCO Deputy Lever was firm on this point, there was division on the French side, with MFA Deputy Suran appearing frustrated at the possibility of the EU having to abandon its mission. In our view, keeping the bar high will not only enhance the EU's influence, but might raise the bar for subsequent UN missions as well, enabling the organization to play a more effective role in Burma.

PEKALA